Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

April 1993

UFMCC programmers held their first official day-long meeting on March 11 to discuss common concerns and prepare for budget sessions with the General Council. Pictured are, from left, Mr. Bernie Barbour, Department of People of Colors; Rev. Steve Torrence, Commission on Faith, Fellowship & Order; Rev. Kit Cherry, Department of Ecumenical Witness and Ministry; Rev. Lou Kavar, World Church Extension; Rev. LaPaula Turner, Women's Secretariat; Mr. Keith Apple, Excel International; Ms. JoNee Shelton, Commission on the Laity; and Rev. Steve Pieters, AIDS Ministry. Full coverage of the March General Council meeting will appear in the May issue of *Keeping in Touch*.

Excitement Builds for March on Washington

UFMCC is being flooded with calls about the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation on April 25.

An average of 20 calls per day are received just about The Wedding, a huge, non-sectarian relationship blessing ceremony and demonstration for the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual couples. Sponsored by UFMCC, The Wedding will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 24, in front of the Internal Revenue Service Building on Constitution Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets NW.

Rev. Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator, has identified the nation's longest-term lesbian and gay couples, who will be introduced at The Wedding. "The gay male couple just celebrated their 50th year together in January, and the lesbian couple has been together for 33 years," he said. Travel expenses for these extraordinary couples are being paid for with revenues generated by The Wedding.

Also appearing at The Wedding will be Mr. Glen Maxey, the State representative who introduced the domestic partners law in Texas. More than 100 couples had already pre-registered when The Wedding was still more than a month away, and 4,000 couples are expected to attend. The Wedding will be followed by a reception at Tracks, 1111 First Street, SE.

UFMCC is also sponsoring a reception in honor of U.S. Congressional leaders from 5 to 7 p.m. Sat., April 24, at MCC Washington, DC's fine new facility, 474 Ridge St. NW. Advance ticket purchase is required for this fundraiser for UFMCC AIDS Ministry and MCC-DC. Wine, punch, fruit and cheeses will be served.

Members of UFMCC are encouraged to gather together for the March by attending the UFMCC communion service at 8:30 a.m. Sunday at the Lincoln Memorial. After worship, those gathered will proceed to the March.

After the March, MCC-DC will hold a worship service at 7:30 p.m. at their church. ❐

General Conference Offers Workshops Galore

More workshops than ever will be offered at General Conference XVI July 18-25 in Phoenix, AZ. Registration has already exceeded 650.

The conference will feature approximately 50 workshops on such popular topics as "The Bible and Evangelism in MCC," "The Meta Church Growth Model: Using Cell Groups Effectively," "Creating AIDS Ministry in the Small Church" and "Christian Feminism 101." Workshops will also address a wide variety of more specialized subjects, ranging from "Healing the Boy Within" to "The Role of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Spiritual Development of People of Mexican Descent."

Many workshops will fall within six major tracks: evangelism and church growth, Department of People of Colors, women's programs, developing musical skills, UFMCC AIDS Ministry, and men's programs.

The Department of People of Colors will be offering a workshop in a new format this year. "Welcoming Diversity" will be an all-day experiential workshop conducted by staff from the National Coalition Building Institute. The workshop will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sat., July 17.

(see Workshops, page 6)

MAY GOD BLESS YOU THIS EASTER

AS WE CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF OUR SOVEREIGN JESUS CHRIST!

Mr. Apple Hired to Head Excel International

After nearly two decades of participation in Excel programming, Mr. Keith Apple of Guerneville, CA, was hired as executive director of Excel International, effective March 5.

Excel is UFMCC's lay renewal ministry. The Excel executive committee hired Mr. Apple for the part-time salaried position on a one-year contract, renewable for up to three years.

Mr. Apple served in the same position from 1982-84, when Excel only had four teams, which have since grown to 14 Excel teams, four Faithfulness teams and two teams in training. "I have gone full circle. I'm back as executive director — but how much bigger the task is!" he said.

He said he has loved Excel from the start. "I went to an Excel weekend in February 1977 and it was on that weekend I became a Christian," Mr. Apple said. "I experienced for the first time in my life God's love for me. It was my absolute peak experience. I went home a changed person."

At that time, there was only one Excel team, which was based in Los Angeles, CA. In 1980, Mr. Apple became one of the three founding members of

Mr. Keith Apple

Excel in the Redwoods in the San Francisco area. He also began leading worship at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville in 1980.

In 1984, with the assistance of Mr. Apple as a member of Excel's executive committee, Excel International was created with the structure that continues to the present. In recent years, he has concentrated on serving in the local Excel team. He also serves as clerk of the board at Russian River MCC in Guerneville.

"My goal as executive director is to really plug into people's needs. What do our 'customers' need and want us to provide? Do we need to revise? Are new programs needed?" said Mr. Apple, who has expertise in evaluation and needs assessment through his secular work as a management consultant.

For example, he said there may be a need for a weekend experience called Excelling in Diversity to help people "see differences as assets."

He plans to do brainstorming about Excel's vision during the annual all-team gathering, which will be held Sat., July 17, in Phoenix, AZ, right before General Conference begins.

Mr. Apple said he hopes to build on the foundation established by Ms. Brenda Blizzard, who served as executive director for the last four years. Ms. Blizzard resigned recently in order to pursue studies in preparation for clergy licensing.

"Brenda's goal was to have an Excel weekend in every district — and Excel achieved that in 1992. I want to have an Excel team in every district," he said. Excel has teams in nine of UFMCC's 13 district. ❐

Laptop Drawing Extended

The Department of People of Colors drawing for a laptop computer has been postponed until General Conference. Second prize is a fax/answering machine.

Proceeds from this "Scratch-A-Patch" fundraiser will be split between DPOC and its Division of White People Healing Racism.

The deadline for fundraisers to return Scratch-A-Patch stubs and proceeds has been extended to June 1. They should be returned to the Fellowship offices in care of Mr. Ravi Verma. ❐

MCC Toronto Celebrates 20 Years of Ministry

One of the snowiest winters in history didn't stop MCC Toronto, Canada, from honoring its founding pastor, Rev. Bob Wolfe, at anniversary celebrations the weekend of Feb. 28.

Rev. Wolfe was guest preacher at services Friday evening where he was presented with a plaque by UFMCC Founder, Rev. Elder Troy Perry. The church is currently pastored by Rev. Brent Hawkes.

During Sunday services, Rev. Perry re-told stories of Rev. Wolfe's arrival without winter clothing and his success in dealing with a young man threatening suicide on the roof of Toronto City Hall. The publicity from this incident helped establish the church. Over 50 special guests joined the congregation at the largest MCC outside the United States. Greetings were read from Toronto's mayor, the Ontario premier and Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod, president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Canadian lesbian and gay activists were praised by Rev. Perry for a series of successful court decisions in Canada recently. These have resulted in removing barriers to homosexuals in the Canadian military and recognition of same-gender relationships by several human rights commissions — despite attempts to block these rights by the federal government.

In a ballroom graced over the years by prime ministers, presidents and other celebrities, church members dined and danced at the Royal York Hotel Saturday evening.

Eastern Canadian District Coordinator Lydia Segal congratulated the "mother church of Canada" for its work in helping start new churches throughout the land. ❐

THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

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Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

In Washington, D.C.
Plan to Attend

A Reception in Honor of U.S. Congressional Leaders

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday, April 24, 1993
in the beautiful new home of
Metropolitan Community Church
474 Ridge Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Wine, punch, fruit and cheeses served. Advance ticket purchase required;
$20.00 per person (Proceeds benefit the UFMCC AIDS Ministry and MCC Washington, D.C.)

Please send me _____ ticket(s) at $20.00 each for the Congressional Reception in Washington, D.C.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Please make check payable to UFMCC and mail to:

UFMCC, Suite 304
5300 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Women's Secretariat Seeks Leaders

The Women's Secretariat is accepting applications through May 15 from women wishing to serve on its executive committee. Three women will be elected to a two-year term and three women to a four-year term.

Applications will be considered by the nominations committee, which will then present no more than 18 nominees for the election, which will occur at the Women's Secretariat general meeting on Sat., July 17, in Phoenix, AZ.

All women who have exhibited leadership and interest in women's issues and demonstrated an ability to work well with people are urged to apply, said Rev. Coni Staff, chair of the Women's Secretariat's interim steering committee.

Duties include participation in conference calls every six to eight weeks, attendance at Women's Secretariat meetings approximately once a year, and completion of all assignments accepted.

Application forms are available from each district liaison to the Women's Secretariat, and must be returned by May 15 to the Women's Secretariat c/o the Fellowship office. ❐

Schedule of UFMCC Events at The March on Washington

Saturday, April 24

11 a.m.	"The Wedding." In front of the IRS Building on Constitution Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets, NW. Reception immediately following the Wedding
until 3:30 p.m.	Reception for Wedding attendees at Tracks, 1111 First Street, SE.
5-7 p.m.	Reception for political leaders at MCC Washington, DC, 474 Ridge Street, NW.

Sunday, April 25

8:30 a.m.	Communion Service at the Lincoln Memorial.
12 Noon	THE MARCH
7:30 p.m.	Sunday worship service at MCC Washington, DC, 474 Ridge Street, NW.

Claim Your Place In History

Advertising space is available in the 25th Anniversary Program Booklet for General Conference XVI of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, July 18-25, 1993 in Phoenix, AZ.

To celebrate 25 years of ministry, UFMCC is creating a superb Program Booklet that promises to be the biggest and most comprehensive in its history. The 25th Anniversary Program Booklet will feature a 12-page retrospective history of UFMCC, as well as welcome letters, worship services, and biographies of elders, speakers and staff. Another special feature will be photos of district coordinators. Even more than previous conference booklets, the 25th Anniversary Program Booklet will become a keepsake to be treasured for years to come.

Become a part of those memories and advertise or just put in a congratulatory note. All participants will also be mentioned on the Supporting Contributors Page and will receive a copy of the 25th Anniversary Program Booklet.

Rates for advertising are as follows:

(1)	Back Cover {2 Color}	US $	300.00	(7-1/2" wide x 9-3/4" tall)
(2)	Inside Back Cover {1 Color}		200.00	(7-1/2" wide x 9-3/4" tall)
(3)	Inside Back Cover {Vellum Overlay -- Half-Tone Photo}		250.00	(7-1/2" wide x 9-3/4" tall)
(4)	Full Page		125.00	(7-1/2" wide x 9-3/4" tall)
(5)	Half Page		75.00	(7-1/2" wide x 5-1/4" tall)
(6)	Quarter Page		50.00	(3-11/16" wide x 4-3/4" tall)
(7)	Business Card		25.00	(3-11/16" wide x 2-15/16" tall)

Measurements indicated above must include the border.

Your check for the **FULL AMOUNT** along with a TYPESET/CAMERA READY ad and the filled out form below must be received by **JUNE 1, 1993** to be included.

MAIL TO: Conference Coordinator
UFMCC, Suite 304
5300 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029

25TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM BOOKLET

Name of Applicant/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Phone ( ) _____

Size Ad _____ Cost $ _____ (Check must be included)

TYPESET/CAMERA READY ad is included (if ad is not typeset or camera ready, it will be returned to you).
We CANNOT return original ads after publication.

Around The Fellowship

Praises

MCC Richmond, VA, held its first day of worship in its new building on Feb. 28. The church continues to sell bonds to finance the purchase and renovation of this historic property in Richmond's Fan District. The building dedication and 15th anniversary activities will be held June 10-13. MCC Richmond is pastored by **Rev. J. Dwayne Johnson.**

MCC Auckland, New Zealand, hosted the dedication and thanksgiving services for Hero Month, a celebration of the Auckland lesbian and gay community throughout the month of February.

Rev. Beverly Howard, clergy on staff at **New Life MCC** of Tidewater in Norfolk, VA, was invited to give a clergy presentation to the Roman Catholic diocese in Suffolk, VA, on pastoral care for gays and lesbians. She will be accompanied by **Ms. Joyce Thunderword**, student clergy, who will speak on pastoral care of people with AIDS.

Rev. Steve Pieters, UFMCC Field Director of AIDS Ministry, was elected secretary of the Board of Directors of AIDS National Interfaith Network at its March 2 meeting in Washington, DC. Rev. Pieters and **Rev. Elder Don Eastman** have served on the ANIN board since its inception in 1987. As secretary, Rev. Pieters will also serve on the Executive Committee.

Two Metropolitan Community Churches recently began radio ministries. **MCC Key West**, FL, started a one-hour radio program of contemporary Christian music; its Christmas Eve and Easter services will be broadcast live. The Voice of Gay Christianity Radio Broadcast, a production of **MCC of Northern Virginia**, Falls Church, VA, and Manos Music Ministries, is a weekly hour-long FM cable access radio broadcast of music, preaching and interviews with gay and lesbian Christians and those who support them. **Manos Clements**, music director of MCC-NOVA and program director of the radio program is seeking financial support and recordings of Christian music and sermons related to gay/lesbian themes. For more information: MCC-NOVA, 7245 Lee Highway, Falls Church, VA 22046.

Transitions

Rev. Roy Beaney was installed as team pastor of **Whosoever MCC of Brighton and Hove**, England, on March 20.

Mr. Troy Fernandez resigned as **Samaritan College** registrar to begin a new position March 15 as Assistant to the Director of Public Policy for **AIDS Project Los Angeles**. His duties include liaison work with people of color organizations and local and state government in California.

Rev. Linda Beane is the new pastor of **Breaking The Silence MCC**, Cocoa, FL.

Rev. Rick Schisler has assumed pastoral leadership at **MCC in El Paso**, TX, effective Feb. 7. He previously pastored in the Methodist denomination.

Reconciliation MCC, Grand Rapids, MI, has called **Rev. Martie Casmero** as pastor. Rev. Casmero left her position on staff at **MCC of the Rockies**, Denver, CO, to assume her new pulpit March 28.

Rev. Bonnie Daniel attended her last General Council meeting as Mid-Central District Coordinator in March. She decided not to seek re-election and will assume duties as pastor of **New Spirit MCC**, Cincinnati, OH.

The following pastors resigned recently: **Rev. Susan Higgins**, **Healing Water MCC**, Hot Springs, AR, effective March 21; **Rev. Linda Laster**, **MCC Detroit**, MI; and **Rev. Marilyn Marr**, **Faith Eternal MCC**, Springfield, IL.

Prayers

Mr. Michael Nauert, who served as organist at General Conference and several churches in UFMCC, died March 16. A memorial service was held March 21 at **MCC San Diego**, CA. A full obituary will appear in the May *Keeping in Touch*.

Rev. Bob Falls of Evansville, IN, was hospitalized with a stroke.

Top 20 Tithes - Feb. 1993

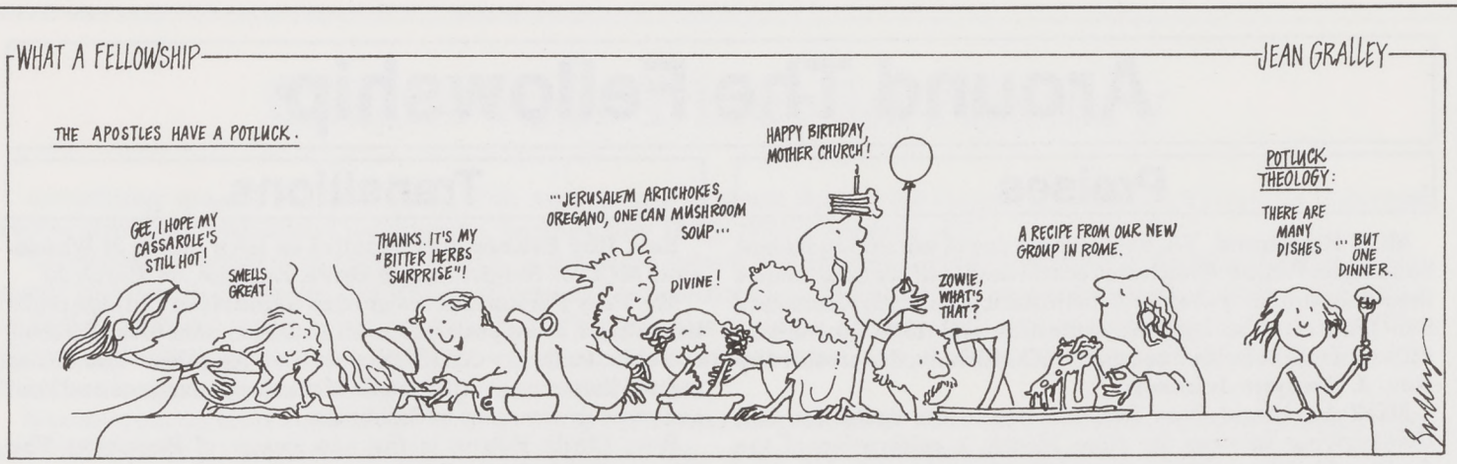
1.	Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	US$	2,685.42
2.	MCC Washington DC, Washington, DC		2,633.04
3.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		2,422.91
4.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		2,278.65
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	1,961.43
6.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,801.81
7.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		1,387.84
8.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,327.51
9.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		1,163.30
10.	MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL		1,159.53
11.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		932.10
12.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		864.95
13.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		772.10
14.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		685.53
15.	MCC of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis, MO		646.61
16.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		642.45
17.	First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA		641.84
18.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		628.80
19.	MCC Richmond, Richmond, VA		626.16
20.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		575.40

{These figures refect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - Feb. 1993

1.	Golden Gate MCC, San Francisco, CA	US$	53.66
2.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA		32.80
3.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		31.76
4.	MCC Silverlake, Los Angeles, CA		24.78
5.	MCC Roseburg, Roseburg, OR		24.46
6.	MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo, CA		24.45
7.	Russian River MCC, Guerneville, CA		24.15
8.	Oasis MCC, Phoenix, AZ		23.81
9.	MCC Hickory, Hickory, NC		23.68
10.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		23.52
11.	Ke Anuenue O Ke Aloha MCC, Honolulu, HI		22.84
12.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		22.70
13.	Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL		20.62
14.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		20.33
15.	Calvary MCC, Redwood City, CA		19.92
16.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		19.75
17.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		19.12
18.	Christ the Liberator MCC, New Brunswick, NJ		18.96
19.	MCC Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA		18.94
20.	Eternal Light MCC, Olympia, WA		18.76

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offerings to the local church.}


WHAT A FELLOWSHIP
JEAN GRALLEY
THE APOSTLES HAVE A POTLUCK.
GEE, I HOPE MY CASSAROLE'S STILL HOT!
SMELLS GREAT!
THANKS. IT'S MY "BITTER HERBS SURPRISE"!
"...JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES, OREGANO, ONE CAN MUSHROOM SOUP..."
DIVINE!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOTHER CHURCH!
ZOWIE, WHAT'S THAT?
A RECIPE FROM OUR NEW GROUP IN ROME.
POTLUCK THEOLOGY:
THERE ARE MANY DISHES
... BUT ONE DINNER.

Australian Accomplishments

Students Graduate

Ms. Vera Bourne and Mr. Robert Clark received bachelor of ministries degrees at Australian Samaritan Education's second graduation and commencement ceremony Feb. 6.

Both have been students of ASE since the initial offering of courses in 1986.

The Commencement speaker was Rev. Elder Willem Hein, ASE coordinator for New Zealand.

1992 has been a watershed year for ASE with the expansion of its program to encompass the Graduate Diploma of Theology which commences this year, and the enrollment of four bachelor of ministry candidates from New Zealand. The number of Australian students has risen to 22. The ASE Board of Trustees expanded to its full complement of five in 1992. The Board of Studies intends to expand by one member in 1993. Members of both boards will meet with Rev. Sandra Robinson, president of Samaritan College, in July to implement a cross-cultural policy for international students within the Samaritan collegiate.

Rev. Clifford Connors serves as dean of ASE. ❐

DC Talks to 5,000 on "HIV Lepers"

Rev. Greg Smith, Australian District Coordinator, preached a sermon titled "HIV Lepers" to nearly 5,000 people at the National Christian Youth Convention in Canberra, Australia, in January.

His sermon, which contrasted the Biblical message of love and justice to the ways the Bible has been misused as an "instrument of torture," received a 10-minute standing ovation.

Typical responses are captured in two letters that Rev. Smith received afterward. "Before tonight, I would have kicked you out of my church, too. I'm sorry. You opened my eyes. Thank you. You're a brave, beautiful, special person and God loves you *heaps*!" wrote one youth.

"I was shocked and saddened to hear you talk of the hate and prejudice and violence you and others have experienced merely because of your sexuality," wrote another. "Thank you for your message, which was the highlight of my week at the convention, and thank you for having the courage to deliver it."

In the weeks since the convention, churches throughout Australia have had many strong responses, both positive and negative, to Rev. Smith's sermon. "It really has set a cat amongst the pigeons," he said. "It made UFMCC more well known, almost overnight." ❐

Prison Hires MCC Chaplain

Many UFMCC clergy have served as prison chaplains, but until now no UFMCC clergyperson had ever been hired by the state to serve in such a capacity.

The California Department of Corrections took an unprecedented action in February by hiring Rev. Jack Isbell as chaplain and director of pastoral care services at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, CA. Rev. Isbell will work primarily in the HIV/AIDS unit, which has 362 inmates known to be HIV-positive. The entire medical facility has 3,000 inmates, all male.

"For once, being from MCC was an advantage," said Rev. Isbell, who said he was hired because of his experience in dealing with HIV/AIDS in the gay community.

Ironically, the California Medical Facility is the same institution that UFMCC sued successfully in the 1970s so that UFMCC chaplains would be allowed to serve in prisons. The UFMCC worship service, which has been offered there every other week since the court decision, will continue to be conducted by Mr. Keith Apple. ❐

Classifieds

TO PLACE YOUR AD

Cost is $15 for the first 25 words or less. Additional words are 70 cents per word. Numbers and abbreviations count as words. All classifieds must be prepaid in U.S. funds. All copy for *Keeping in Touch* Classified Advertising is subject to the approval of the Editorial Board. Appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by UFMCC. Mail ads to: Keeping in Touch Classifieds, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

SALVATION SCRIPTURE, and Sexuality by Bishop Mark Shirlau clearly demonstrates that God loves everyone, regardless of sexuality. $4.00 includes tax, postage. Healing Spirit Press, P.O. Box 94, Villa Grande, CA 95486.

MAIL ORDER

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GROCERY SAVINGS, 20%+ coupons you choose in advance 1200+ items. List and information with $1.00. Coupon Connection, 279 East Fairmount, Suite 115, Lakewood, NY 14750.

Workshops

(continued from page 1)

Registrations for the conference must be postmarked on or before June 15 to receive the following discounted rates for the entire conference: $233 U.S.; $130 outside U.S.; and $100 for the final weekend. ❐